THE LOGOS AS TEACHER IN AD DIOGNETUM XI, 1

BY

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Here the unknown author of Ad Diognetum emphasizes that as a teacher he continues the tradition of the apostles. He calls himself ἀποστόλων μαθητής. This need not mean that he knew the apostles personally, so that he really would have to be reckoned among the Apostolic Fathers. Meecham admits that the turn in itself need not imply more than that the author accepts the apostolic doctrine.

The anonymous writer skilfully uses various terms all connected in meaning with either teaching or learning: μαθητής – διδάσκαλος – παραδοθέντα – μαθηταίς. He is a "pupil of the apostles", but in his turn also "teacher of the pagans", who if they listen to him will in their turn become "disciples of the Truth". He serves his pupils with ἐν παραδοθέντα. What do these words mean? They may denote two things. In the first place the meaning could be: "what was delivered by the apostles". In favour of this view we can adduce the fact that he calls himself a "pupil of the apostles". But the second possibility is more in accordance with the trend of the author's argument: "what was in the first instance handed down to the apostles". In this case the author wants to say: the apostles did not get their wisdom from themselves. They owed it to somebody else.

1 In this article I take the view that chapters XI and XII are authentic. Cf. H.I. Marrou, A Diognète (Paris, 1951) pp. 219-229. The fact that in the preceding chapters cognate ideas about the function of the Logos are to be found, strengthens this view.

2 H.G. Meecham, The Epistle to Diognetus (Manchester, 1949) p. 136. Meecham himself does not believe in the authenticity of the last two chapters.
That the Christian faith is not the result of human invention, is an idea that the author emphatically brings out in other places as well, e.g. IV, 6: υἱὸς τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ λόγος τοῦ πατρὸς. In this context, he states: Ωκεν ὁ λόγος τοῦ πατρὸς τουτεταγμένος, that the Logos is not the result of human invention. In VII, 4: Οὐ γὰρ ἐπίγειον ἐφήμα τούτων αὐτοῖς παρεδόθη. By means of this, the author wishes to accentuate the same idea: the apostles who have taught him, also learnt it in their turn.

Who could have taught them but Christ, who is the Truth and the Logos? When in VII, 2 the author begins to speak about God’s plan of salvation, the first thing he says is that God has sent from heaven τὸν Λόγον to bring salvation. Afterwards this is stated more precisely: τὸν Κυρίου καὶ Θεοῦ τοῦ πατρὸς. Finally, he says: Πέμπον οἶνον (VII, 4). To the writer this Son is therefore in the first place the Truth and the Logos. To Him alone God revealed His plan of salvation: ὁ Λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ Πατέρα. The Son did not keep this mystery to Himself, but through Him God revealed it to us (VIII, 11). And if in IX, 6 we connect αὐτῷ with the preceding τὸν σωτήρα, the author calls the Son not only ἀριστός, νοῦς, φῶς, but also τροφεύς, πατήρ, διδάσκαλος.

The answer that may be expected from this writer to the question: from whom did the apostles learn it? is therefore: from the Logos, who is the Didaskalos. And indeed, such an answer is actually given in ch. XI. Immediately after the words ὑπηρέτῳ γινομένῳ ἀληθείᾳ, he continues: For what man who has been taught in the right way (διδαχθείς) does not seek to learn (μαθεῖν) exactly ὅσα τὸ σωτηρικόν οἷον τῶν σωτηρίων (the things that have been revealed by the Logos to His pupils)? The author then calls up the figure of the Logos in His earthly appearance (ὁ λόγος φανερός: Jesus who, speaking in plain words (παρρησίᾳ λαλῶν) initiates His disciples into the σωτηρία (XI, 2). Thus it would seem that there is much to be said for the interpretation of τὰ παραδόθητα as meaning: “what has been taught by the Logos phaneis to the apostles”. Precisely when the Logos

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4 Παρρησία λαλεῖν is an aspect of the historical Jesus which is especially met with in the Fourth Gospel: 7, 26; 16, 29; 18, 20.